DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 340 HE 034 990

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TITLE Developing the Executive Mindset for Minority Deans.

PUB DATE 2002-04-00

NOTE 26p.; Adapted from a chapter in "College Deans: Leading from Within" by M. Wolverton and W. H. Gmelch, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing. For a related paper on dean leadership, see HE 034 993.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Academic Deans; *Administrator Attitudes; Competence; Credibility; Higher Education; *Minority Groups

IDENTIFIERS Confidence; *Executive Mind

ABSTRACT

An attempt was made to apply to the academic deanship finding by D. Thomas and J. Gabarro that executives of color who succeed in business possess three personal resources: confidence, competence, and credibility. Through the use of relational regression techniques, researchers examined deans perceptions of leadership success, competence, confidence, and credibility across four subpopulations of the sample of deans: white males, white females, minority males, and minority females. The National Study of Academic Deans was conducted to establish a baseline of information about academic deans in the United States. Responses were received from 800 deans from 360 public and private institutions. The resulting database included a wealth of information about deans, including their perceptions of the success, competence, confidence, and credibility. Findings suggest that the findings of Thomas and Gabarro may be applicable to higher education. People from the groups that have historically filled deanships see definite ties among these resources, but their minority counterparts were less likely to se this picture. The paper contains suggestions about what minority deans can do to increase confidence, competence, and credibility through approaches such as mentoring, coursework, and job choice, and what universities can do to increase confidence, competence, and credibility in minority deans. (Contains 6 tables and 35 references.) (SLD)

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DEVELOPING THE EXECUTIVE MINDSET FOR MINORITY DEANS

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association
April, 2002
New Orleans, LA

This paper is an adaptation of a chapter from Wolverton, M. and Gmelch, W. H. (2002). *College Deans: Leading from Within*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing (Oryx Press/ACE).

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HE034990

DEVELOPING THE EXECUTIVE MINDSET FOR MINORITY DEANS

In 1992, two Harvard Business School professors, David Thomas and John Gabarro, embarked on a six-year project in which they systematically examined the effects of race on executive development. Then, and even now, most literature focused on what keeps minorities out of the executive suite (the glass ceiling phenomenon). Rather than study barriers to entry, Thomas and Gabarro (1999) chose to study the winners—those pioneers who had successfully breached the firewall and "forged a trail over rough and uncharted territory" (p. 5), so to speak. The basic premise that drove this decision was simple: "Lessons drawn from success frequently suggest how to identify sources of leverage that can help surmount obstacles to advancement" (p. 5). In effect, their research complements existing research that focuses on identifying specific barriers to success.

They conducted 54 qualitative case studies at three companies known for moving minorities into executive positions (20 minority executives and 34 white and plateaued minority managers) to establish commonalities and differences across their experiences. Most of the minority participants were African American and male. Only 8 of their participants were women and, as a consequence, their data did not allow them to establish gender effects. To be categorized as an executive, case study participants had to be responsible for core business functions and in positions that lead to the CEO position or other senior operating roles. This is because persons of color and women are often shunted away from these positions into high-level staff positions in areas, such as human resources, public relations, or legal counsel, that do not carry the types of fiscal responsibilities deemed necessary for CEO succession (Thomas and Gabarro, 1999).

In 1996-97, Gmelch and Wolverton randomly surveyed 1,360 academic deans in colleges of business, nursing, education, and liberal arts with 800 responses (88 were deans of color) (Wolverton and Gmelch, 2002)). For the most part, these respondents rated themselves as moderately to highly effective leaders. To us, the situational similarities between higher education administration in 1997 and corporate America in 1992 seems self-evident. The academic deanship provides one of the primary succession routes to the top two executive positions (president and provost) in higher education institutions. Yet, it appears that we find scant representation of persons of color within its ranks. Instead, we posit that we might find more minorities in human resources, public relations, student affairs, EEO, and other high-level legal staff positions (Jones, 2001). In contrast to Thomas and Gabarro, because the deans' study included colleges of nursing, the resulting database did include a good representation of white women (about 40% of the respondents were female). Without the deans of nursing colleges, however, the proportion of women would have been smaller (somewhere between 15% and 20%) (Glazer-Raymo, 1999).

The starkness of these similarities prompted us to speculate that theories about minority executive development in business might also hold true for minority executive development in higher education. This paper reports our attempt to test Thomas and Gabarro's primary finding: executives of color who succeed in business possess three personal resources—confidence, competence, and credibility. Through the use of relational regression techniques, we examined deans' perceptions of leadership success, competency, confidence, and credibility across four subpopulations of the sample (white males, white females, minority males, and minority females). Implications for leadership development in terms of building competence, credibility, and confidence in deans of color (or aspirants to the position) are then discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The personal resources of competence, credibility, and confidence emerge as a result of strong commitment to excellence, an intrinsic love of the work chosen, carefully selected job assignments, and critical support received from mentors as a part of early-career development (Cox Jr., 1993; Duff, 1999; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). All three attributes are highly developed in effective leaders; this is especially true for persons of color. The combination of these core personal resources along with positive psychological characteristics and formatives experiences contribute to a focused and deep expertise highly valued in higher education.

Competence has components that are relevant to executive development: deep grounding in one or more areas of expertise, and continual mastery of new and broader skills. It is developed cumulatively through engaging in different work contexts and involves dealing with tasks both familiar and difficult (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). Competence is also viewed as a learning and developmental process that occurs through awareness of organizational assets, knowledge and understanding of change, and initiative through behavior and action (Cox Jr. & Beale, 1997; Rothery, 1972).

Credibility depends on a dean's reputation for successful performance, integrity, and impact on the core academic and managerial functions. It is directly influenced through early relationships with key supervisors and peers in combination with demonstrated performance (Cox Jr., 1993; Duff, 1999; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). As a corollary, those who are successful in cultivating both elements develop a reputation for handling critical assignments and tasks.

Confidence is considered the most important of the required personal resources. It includes belief in one's own past achievements, current competence, and future ability to succeed. It is a positive evaluation of one's self, of one's competence and ability, and of one's

personal judgment of worthiness (Hill, 1984). Confidence is experienced as a sense of internal security that bolsters one's capacity to ward off doubts, to withstand attacks to one's credibility, and maintain a self-concept that is relatively immune to the self-fulfilling effects of stereotypes (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999).

Methodology

The National Study of Academic Deans (NSAD; n = 800) was conducted to establish a baseline of information about academic deans in the U.S. Deans who participated in the NSAD worked at universities in one of the following three Carnegie classifications--Research, Masters, or Baccalaureate. Sixty public and 60 private institutions were randomly selected from each Carnegie category, resulting in a sample of 360 institutions. At each institution, the deans of the colleges of education, business, liberal arts, and nursing were asked to complete the survey. Researchers purposefully selected these four colleges so that they could compare like deans across institution type. A totally random sample, where deans of law, engineering, medicine, agriculture and so forth were included, would have hampered any such comparisons. In addition, colleges of nursing were included in the sampling frame in an effort to increase female participation.

The project employed a standard survey research protocol, using Dillman's (2000) design and survey deployment methods. The resulting database includes deans' personal and institutional demographics specifics, their perceptions of role conflict and ambiguity, views of the responsibilities associated with the position, perceptions of job-related stress and the factors associated with it, and deans' understanding of leadership.

Forty-one percent of the deans in this study were female. Deans, on average, were 54 years old, married, and had been in their positions for slightly more than five years. Just under

12% (88) carried minority status, one-half of whom were African American; of this group, one-half were male. More than one-half of the respondents were inside hires. In general, they were satisfied in their positions, and did not suffer abnormal amounts of work-related stress (although 34% of the men in the study and 40% of the women did exhibit high levels of work-related stress, and most deans suggested that at least 60% of the overall stress they experience was work-related). Deans in the study seemed to experience slightly above-average levels of role conflict and ambiguity. They believed themselves to be fairly competent at what they do, and are, for the most part, committed to their universities with no plans to leave their institutions in the near future.

Most deans in the study became administrators to contribute to and improve their colleges; few went into administration for financial gains or because they desired power. About one-quarter of them planned to return to faculty status; less than 15 % planned to move to another deanship; almost 30% will seek higher academic administrative positions or leadership options outside the academy. For the most part, these deans believed that their universities are good places to work and suggested that both the academic and environmental quality of their institutions are good.

Getting at the Executive Mindset

To examine deans' perceptions of competence, confidence and credibility as they pertain to perceived success in the deanship, we built one relational regression model and tested it across four subpopulations (white males, white females, minority males, and minority females) of the dataset. In each case, we used the same four variables. Perception of success (the independent variable) was captured in the statement, *I am an effective leader* (rated from 1 to 5, 5 high). Perceived confidence was measured by responses to the statement, *I am confident in my*

leadership abilities; competency in the statement, *I could be as effective elsewhere.* Credibility was reflected in the responses to a composite variable consisting of four statements about leadership behavior: *I can be relied on, I follow through on commitments, I keep promises, and I am consistent in word and actions* (alpha = .75) (all rated on the same 5-point scale).

Perceived Leadership Success

As a precursor to testing the model, we examined each of the variables separately to identify any significant perceptual differences across subgroups. In general, females rated their leadership success higher than did their male counterparts. There was no discernible difference between white males and female deans, but minority female deans rated themselves higher than minority male deans did. No difference existed between the two male subgroups; however, minority females viewed themselves as more successful than white female deans saw themselves. One-half of the minority female deans rated this variable 5; no one in this group awarded herself a 1 or 2. In the other three groups, less than 30% rated themselves as highly. A few white male deans suggested very low levels of success (1 or 2); the lowest rating minority males used was 3. See Table 1.

Confidence

Slightly over one-third of both male (38%) and female deans (37%) in the study assigned the highest rating (5) in confidence to themselves. No significant differences appeared between white males, white females, and minority males, but minority female deans were more likely to rate themselves as confident than were members of the other subgroups. See Table 2.

Competence

Overall, 42% of the males in the study rated competence 5; 45% of female deans assigned it the same rating. No significant differences in perceptions of competence existed

between men and women in the study. Significant differences did exist between white and minority deans, in general, and white and minority females, specifically with minority female deans assigning a higher value to this variable. See Table 3.

Credibility

Women as a whole, believed they possessed higher levels of credibility than did men (mean score for women was 4.54 and for men was 4.48). However, only about one-quarter of either men or women in the study thought of themselves as highly credible leaders (5). Again, minority female deans rated this variable significantly more characteristic of themselves than did other groups of themselves. See Table 4.

By Thomas and Gabarro's standards, all three personal resources—confidence, competence, and credibility—should, at least for minority deans, be significant contributors to leadership success. But, when we look at each of the four subgroups, some interesting patterns emerge. For both white males and females, all three constructs are significantly important. For, each of the minority subsets, however, this relationship does not hold. For minority female deans, only self-confidence bears a significant relationship to leadership success. In some respects, this finding verifies Thomas and Gabarro's assertion that self-confidence is the most important resource for minority executives. For minority males, competency and confidence were significantly related to success, suggesting perhaps a realization that self-confidence can carry a dean only so far. Interestingly, credibility was not a significant factor for either minority men or minority women in the study. Table 5 provides a verbal representation of these findings. Table 6 reports the statistical findings for the four regression models.

Implications: How Do We Develop the Executive Mindset

Based on these findings, it appears that Thomas and Gabarro's findings may be applicable to higher education. A somewhat obvious finding lies in the fact that people from the groups that have historically filled deanships (white males and now, white females) see a definite tie between confidence, competence, credibility and leadership effectiveness. In comparison, their minority counterparts seem to grasp only part of the picture. This suggests that group time-in-rank (deans of color typically have been in their positions for a shorter period of time; female deans of color in the study had the least tenure in the position) may also have some bearing on the situation, especially when it comes to developing leadership credibility among your peers.

We suggest that while developing competence, credibility, and confidence is no guarantee to successful ascension up the organizational ladder, without honing these personal resources, promotion to a deanship and beyond may be unattainable. And, although it is critical for an organization, through identifying and nurturing talent, to create a culture of leadership, it is our contention that minority deans[1] must cultivate these personal resources early in their careers if they aspire to executive positions high up the career ladder (Carey & Ogden, 2000; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999; Wren, 1995).

What Minority Deans Can Do To Increase Confidence, Competence, and Credibility

Mentoring

Nurturing mentor relationships is a critical step in attaining and augmenting these personal resources. Conventional wisdom suggests that when seeking a mentor it is optimal to

[1] We use minority deans as in an inclusive term. While we have primarily targeted persons of color in the following recommendations, our suggestions are also pertinent to white women who function as minorities in predominantly white, male disciplines, such as engineering, business, law, medicine, and the hard sciences.

identify a person with whom you share similar characteristics: racial/ethnic background, gender, or possibly research interests. For minorities, however, the abundance of mentors with similar backgrounds is small--a common complaint among these groups (Lancaster, 1998). If minority senior-level administrators are available, then they can be pursued as mentors. However, whether they are available or not, this should not deter minorities from seeking out mentors from the traditional, mainstream ranks--namely, white and male mentors. Although they may not share similar racial/ethnic backgrounds, choosing a traditional senior-level administrator as a mentor has its advantages when it comes to developing these personal resources. Lancaster (1998) suggests that seeking mentors with whom one has little in common can provide some of the best learning experiences. White, male mentors--who occupy most of the senior-level administrative positions--offer a perspective that works to increase knowledge and insight into the dominant mindset of central administration and the nature of senior-level positions, thus increasing competency and confidence (Astin & Leland, 1991; Lancaster, 1998). Such mentor-mentee relations also provide opportunities to build credibility with individuals who could be used as future references or even open up avenues for future advancement.

Mentors should also be sought among the mid-level administrative ranks, particularly for those individuals who have experienced difficulty in moving up the organizational ladder. These mentors can alert aspirants to organizational pitfalls (Lancaster, 1998). This broad range of mentors--from the traditional senior-level ranks to mid-level administrators--provides a more holistic view of the institution and the dynamic connectedness of the deanship to the institution. In the end, such a move helps potential leaders develop competence, credibility, and confidence (Astin & Leland, 1991; Helgesen, 1995; Lancaster, 1998; Milstein, 1993).

Business Management Coursework

The qualities that define the successful business--high efficiency, quality management, sound human resource management, and fiscal responsibility, to name a few--are now finding their way into institutions of higher education (Birch, 1985). The impetus for a corporate approach comes from senior administration--presidents, provosts, and regents--who are aware of the need for competent, prudent administrators to lead the component parts of the enterprise (Bright & Richards, 2001). A faculty member who becomes a dean in such a setting is more likely to see academic issues as defined by resources and policies, leading to solutions and actions that are cast in quantitative terms, as opposed to the traditional faculty perspective of programs, colleagues, and academic freedom (Bright & Richards, 2001). Even greater is the administrative responsibility for sound fiscal management strategies that create opportunities to attract outstanding faculty and students (Lenington, 1996). The successful transition from faculty to dean could be enhanced through understanding the business aspects of administration. Since very few formal training programs for deans exist in the country (Townsend & Bassoppo-Moyo, 1996), we suggest that minorities, who are currently deans or seeking a deanship, consider taking or auditing graduate-level business management courses. Courses offered in business--finance, economics, marketing, law, and human resource management--can be used as an added resource in handling the business administration aspects of leading a college. Such experiences can increase the competence and confidence of deans. Over time, credibility is increased once the dean establishes a proven record of successful management.

Avoid Racialized or Feminized Jobs

"Too often Black managers are channeled into The Relations as I call them—the community relations, the public relations, the personnel relations. These may be important

functions, but they are not gut functions that make the business grow or bring in revenues. And they are not the jobs that prepare an executive to be a CEO" (Jones, Jr., 1986, p. 89)

The same principles can apply in higher education. For minority faculty seeking deanships, job offers for their services may pour in from areas within and outside the university system that are essentially outside the arena of power and influence. Such positions effectively derail them from a career track that could eventually lead to more powerful senior-level administrative positions. Jobs with titles, such as "Assistant to the President for Diversity" or "Director of Multicultural Affairs," may pay very well and can offer a direct connection to senior administration. But, these jobs tend to be token positions that serve only to bolster the image of the university while damaging the credibility of the person who takes the job (Guillory, 2001; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). By staying focused on the more viable jobs--professorships, business administration and the like--during the incipient stages of their careers, minority deans can enhance their credibility and optimally position themselves for increased central organizational responsibility and occupational advancement (Carey & Ogden, 2000; Cox Jr., 1993; Duff, 1999; Guillory, 2001; Muame, 1999; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999).

What Universities Can Do To Increase Confidence, Competence, and Credibility in Minority Deans

Establish a Community of Deans

Universities can increase the personal resources of deans by encouraging them to form networks or partnerships with other deans within their own university and outside the university system. Networks keep all deans acclimated to the administrative environment and its responsibilities. This is especially true for heretofore marginalized populations. The purpose of the network is to provide an enclave where deans can exchange ideas, discuss issues--fiscal

management, budget constraints, dealing with faculty and so on--and gain support when confidence may be waning (Austin, 1997). By promoting networking through the facilitation of retreats and dialogues among deans within and across institutions, universities can decrease the level of ambiguity some deans experience as a result of the lack of formal training in the administrative aspects of governing a college (Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez & Nies, 2001). This process of socialization will increase the confidence level of all deans as they struggle to find their niche within the university. For new deans, the network is also a good way to understand the sociopolitical culture of the university as well as learn how to deal with central administration, all of which work to enhance competency (Grossman, 1981; Prock, 1983). Networking can also occur at the national level where active participation provides opportunities through annual meetings, publications, and seminars on pertinent topics. Among the most notable are the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the Engineering Deans' Institute of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), the Council Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS), the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD), and the Council of Graduate School (CGS) (Bright & Richards, 2001). In all, these wider linkages of deans create a way to find support, advice, and practical help that work to enhance confidence, competence, and credibility (Bright & Richards, 2001).

University-Sponsored Programs or Institutes

Universities can also enhance confidence, competence, and credibility among minority deans through university-sponsored programs and institutes. In an effort to increase the number of minorities in senior-level administrative positions, several universities throughout the country began programs and institutes designed to expose members of these underrepresented groups to the day-to-day functions of administration.

One such program is the Administrative Fellows Program at Pennsylvania State University. The program was originally designed to provide administrative mentoring for women but has expanded to include men from minority groups. The objectives of the program are to identify faculty and staff who have potential for effective leadership; to increase awareness of the complexity of issues facing higher education and to enhance understanding of the environment in which decisions are being made; and to provide opportunities for participation in a wide range of decision-making processes, learning activities, and program management that provide a better understanding of the challenges of higher education administration. Although participation in the program does not guarantee advancement into the administrative ranks, the program has been credited for increasing the pool of women and minorities in the administrative ranks at Penn State University (Ard, 1994; Pennsylvania State University, 2002).

Similar to the Penn State program, the Management Internships Program at Arizona State University is designed to provide women and minorities opportunities for intensive exposure to university administration. However, this program is open to any full-time staff, administrators, or faculty who seek to achieve their career goals in higher education administration. Participant responsibilities include research and analytical work, design and implemention of new programs, serving on committees, and assisting in budget preparation (Arizona State University, 2002). Exposure to these core areas in administration helps increase competency as well as confidence among women and minority deans.

Harvard University sponsors one of the more elite institutes in the country focusing on the qualities necessary for effective leadership, especially during times of major institutional change. The program examines four themes: senior leadership, the contexts of leadership, the changing industry of higher education, and mobilizing for change (Harvard University, 2002).

The Institute for Educational Management (IEM) at Harvard attracts some of the top administrators from colleges and universities around the country. This two-week, summer program includes workshops specifically designed for new presidents, provosts, vice-chancellors, and academic deans. The rationale for choosing a mainstream (non-minority) oriented program such as Harvard's IEM is to maintain a holistic, more well-rounded perspective on issues of leadership and administration in higher education that diversity-focused programs--although important for opening doors of opportunity for minorities--may not offer. Such an approach will augment competency among minorities through exposure to academic issues outside the context of race, thus broadening their outlook.

Build a Culture of Credibility

Perhaps most important to the advancement of persons who are developing these resources is the knowledge that the culture of their universities embraces openness and willingness to advance them despite the existence of ceilings, institutionalized biases, and crony networks. Employees respond positively to recognition of their personal achievements; universities must encourage an affirmative culture that recognizes the worth of their deans' efforts (Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance, 1999). This approach involves building trust between administration and the dean, establishing and maintaining communication between them, and inviting and acting upon input from deans on issues that require resolution (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999; Morgan & Weckmueller, 1991). Knowing that their own institutions provide feedback and support to them no doubt will serve to strengthen deans' perceptions of their own competence and identity.

Conclusion

In the end, the work of minority deans is enhanced by reaching beyond the confines of the academic department and broadening their scope of knowledge, networks, and relationships. Though this has applicability to deans of all ethnicities, we must acknowledge that the novelty of minorities in decanal positions warrants a specialized look at all possibilities. We have named three strategies in which individuals can engage and three that their institutions should encourage. The challenge is to foster an environment that does not preclude each dean's development of his or her crucial personal resources--confidence, competence, and credibility.

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Table 1: Differences in Perceptions of Leadership Success		
	Mean	% Rated 5
White Males	4.1	25%
White Females	4.2	29%
Minority Males	4.1	26%
Minority Females	4.5	50%

Table 2: Difference in Perceptions of Confidence		
	Mean	% Rated 5
White Males	4.2	38%
White Females	4.1	32%
Minority Males	4.2	40%
Minority Females	4.6	65%

Table 3: Differences in Perceptions of Competence		
	Mean	% Rated 5
White Males	4.1	40%
White Females	4.2	42%
Minority Males	4.4	51%
Minority Females	4.5	64%

Table 4: Differences in Perceptions of Credibility		
	Mean	% Rated 5
White Males	4.5	26%
White Females	4.5	26%
Minority Males	4.5	26%
Minority Females	4.6	30%

Table 5: Leadership Success Models By Population	
White Males	Successful Leadership = Confidence + Competence + Credibility
White Females	Successful Leadership = Confidence + Competence + Credibility
Minority Males	Successful Leadership = Confidence + Competence
Minority Females	Successful Leadership = Confidence

Note: each equation shows those personal resources that were statistically significant to the subgroup.

Table 6: Leadership Success Regression Models by Population

	ßeta	*t*-Statistic	*p*-value
White Males			
Competence	0.12	3.91	0.000
Confidence	0.30	7.47	0.000
Credibility	0.36	5.68	0.000
Constant	1.67	2.32	0.021
Multiple r = .55			
Adjusted R^2 = .30			
White Females			
Competence	0.10	2.33	0.020
Confidence	0.40	8.59	0.000
Credibility	0.26	3.08	0.002
Constant	0.95	2.54	0.012
Multiple r = .63			
Adjusted R^2 = .43			
Minority Males			
Competence	0.49	3.89	0.000
Confidence	0.38	3.10	0.003
Credibility	- 0.24	- 1.21	0.234
Constant	1.42	1.72	0.092
Multiple r = .68			
Adjusted R^2 = .43			
Minority Females			
Competence	-0.11	-1.15	0.255
Confidence	0.41	2.82	0.008
Credibility	0.20	1.00	0.323
Constant	2.14	1.80	0.077
Multiple r = .46			
Adjusted R^2 = .15			